About this Book

The fourth edition of this book begins with NAEYC's position statement on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). This statement is the foundation for the book's content and structure and provides a vision for the early childhood education profession that is brought to life by the book. The book addresses the ideas and key concepts outlined in the position statement through the narrative, vignettes, and pedagogical features.

Parts of the Book

The book is divided into two sections, with a total of 11 chapters, plus five appendices. The table on page xxiii illustrates the relationship between the position statement and the book's content.

Part 1: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Context

As shown in the table, the five chapters contained in Part 1 expand on the three core considerations and the nine principles of child development and learning by highlighting both the research base and the practical considerations for teachers. These chapters also emphasize important concepts and updates from the position statement itself. Chapters 4 and 5 expand on two particular principles to emphasize how both education content knowledge and play are essential to effective early learning.

Part 2: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Action

Part 2 focuses on implementation of the core considerations and the principles in practice through the six guidelines listed in the table. These guidelines also correspond to the standards outlined in "Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators" (NAEYC 2020b). Each chapter

in Part 2 discusses one of the guidelines. These chapters feature charts with examples of practice related to that guideline, organized by age.

These charts have undergone several changes from the third edition of the book. First, the column headings have changed from "Developmentally Appropriate/In Contrast" to "Examples of Developmentally Appropriate Practices/Examples of Practices to Avoid." This change is intended to emphasize that no practice is always developmentally appropriate. What is developmentally appropriate may look different in different situations based on the specific contexts and teacher decision making that emerge from the core considerations. The change in wording also underscores that the examples in the chart are just that—examples, and not a definitive list.

Second, the charts in each chapter begin with a chart outlining teaching practices that are relevant to all ages, followed by charts with specific examples for four age groups (infant and toddler, preschool, kindergarten, and primary). Readers of previous editions will notice that the book is no longer organized by age group. There are two major reasons for this change. The first is to align with principle 4 in the position statement; the new organization acknowledges that while there are general progressions of development and learning for various age groups, there are also great variations due to cultural contexts, experiences, and individual differences. The previous organization of the chapters may have led teachers of a particular age group to focus on only the information presented for that age group. It is important for educators to understand children's learning progressions—what comes before a skill or understanding and what comes next—to effectively support all children's learning and development. The second reason for this change is to reduce the repetition in the guidelines across the age groups. The new "For All Ages" chart now captures examples of practices that apply to children from birth through age 8.

Comparison of Content in the Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice and Fourth Edition of the Book

Content from the 2020 Position Statement on DAP	Corresponding Content in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice,* 4th ed.
Core Considerations to Inform Decision Making (pages 6–7)	Part 1: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Context Chapter 1: Intentional Teaching: Complex Decision Making and the Core Considerations
Principles of Child Development and Learning and Implications That Inform Practice (pages 8–13)	Chapter 2: The Principles in Practice: Understanding Child Development and Learning in Context
Core Considerations (pages 6–7), Principles of Child Development and Learning (pages 8–13), and content throughout the statement	Chapter 3: Context Matters: Reframing Teaching in Early Childhood Education
Principle 7 (page 12)	Chapter 4: Teaching Content in Early Childhood Education
Principle 3 (pages 9–10)	Chapter 5: The Power of Playful Learning in the Early Childhood Setting
Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Action: Using Knowledge of Child Development and Learning in Context (page 14)	Part 2: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Action
1. Creating a Caring, Equitable Community of Learners (pages 15–17)	Chapter 6: Creating a Caring, Equitable Community of Learners
2. Engaging in Reciprocal Partnerships with Families and Fostering Community Connections (page 18)	Chapter 7: Engaging in Reciprocal Partnerships with Families and Fostering Community Connections
3. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing Children's Development and Learning (pages 19–20)	Chapter 8: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing Children's Development and Learning
4. Teaching to Enhance Each Child's Development and Learning (pages 21–24)	Chapter 9: Teaching to Enhance Each Child's Development and Learning
5. Planning and Implementing an Engaging Curriculum to Achieve Meaningful Goals (pages 25–27)	Chapter 10: Planning and Implementing an Engaging Curriculum to Achieve Meaningful Goals
6. Demonstrating Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator (page 28)	Chapter 11: Demonstrating Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator
Recommendations for Implementing *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (page 29)	Appendices
1. Recommendations for Schools, Family Child Care Homes, and Other Program Settings (page 30)	D: Creating and Implementing Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: A Guide for Public School Audiences E: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Early Learning Setting: Tips and Resources for Early Childhood Educators
2. Recommendations for Higher Education and Adult Development (page 31)	C: Changes to the Position Statement, Changes to the Book: Resources and Strategies for Faculty

Chapter Features

A number of new features help readers focus on the content of the chapters, reflect on their purpose for reading, and make connections to their own practice.

› **Learning goals** at the beginning of each chapter state what readers will be able to do after reading the chapter.

› **Thought questions** at the beginning of each chapter set the stage for reading by engaging readers in considering what they already know about the chapter topic and how it might pertain to their own practice.

› **Reflection questions** at the end of each chapter prompt readers to review and consider how to apply the content to their own situations, whether or not they are currently working with children. In addition, some chapters contain reflection questions throughout the chapter that pertain to specific vignettes. These questions encourage readers to think critically about the practice being illustrated and how it does or does not demonstrate effective practice.

› **In Context sidebars** explore particular aspects of social and cultural contexts, such as ability, race, and language, as they connect to the chapter topic.

› **Digging Deeper into Knowledge,** embedded throughout the chapters and indicated with small shovel icons beside boxed text, points to Appendix B: Digging Deeper into Knowledge, which lists select additional resources on a topic.

> Refer to "Appendix B: Digging Deeper into Knowledge" for additional resources on anti-bias, anti-racism, diversity, and equity.

Appendices

Appendix A: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Action: Educator Snapshots and Reflections

In this collection of vignettes, early childhood educators describe their interactions with children and reflect on how they implement developmentally

appropriate practice in their work and what that means to them professionally and personally. These examples highlight what engaged and often joyful learning can look like in a range of settings and offer concrete ways to make developmentally appropriate practice a living and ongoing approach. While these examples provide insights and opportunities for discussion, they also serve as a model to help educators consider questions such as the following:

› What does developmentally appropriate practice look like in my own setting?

› How do I think about my own practice and my own context?

NAEYC will continue to develop this feature online, providing a growing pool of examples to support educators' self-reflection.

Appendix B: Digging Deeper into Knowledge

This appendix invites further reading and knowledge development on a range of topics, including anti-bias and anti-racism education, culturally responsive teaching, effective approaches to teaching math and literacy, child development, assessment and observation, and engaging children in playful learning. Our hope is that readers will pursue additional information and coursework.

Appendix C: Changes to the Position Statement, Changes to the Book: Resources and Strategies for Faculty

This appendix offers examples of ways faculty can use this book and other NAEYC resources. The discussion focuses on integrating strengths-based, hands-on sequences of learning, watching, questioning, practicing, and reflecting that support students in higher education courses in acquiring and applying the values and actions of developmentally appropriate practice through coursework and field experiences.

Appendix D: Creating and Implementing Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: A Guide for Public School Audiences

Written by members of the Department of Early Childhood of Boston Public Schools (BPS), these early childhood educators describe the work BPS has done

to address the challenge of balancing the demand of increasing young children's academic performance with assuring that the learning environment encompasses all of what is in the best interest of young children within the framework of developmentally appropriate practice. The authors' experiences offer readers considerations for their own work in public school settings.

Appendix E: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Early Learning Setting: Tips and Resources for Early Childhood Educators

This appendix suggests ways for educators, program directors, and educational leaders to engage with the content of the book. It also describes online resources that can support educators in deepening their understanding of developmentally appropriate practice.

Glossary

The glossary covers key terms used in the book beyond those already included and defined in the position statement's glossary.

Linking to Online Content Features

For additional supporting materials on implementing developmentally appropriate practice, please visit NAEYC.org/DAP. These materials will evolve over time. Here are some of the types of resources you may find there.

General Resources (NAEYC.org/DAP/general-resources)

› Glossary

› Appendix A: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Action: More Snapshots and Reflections. Read additional educator stories and examples.

› Appendix B: Digging Deeper into Knowledge. Explore a more comprehensive list of additional resources to extend your learning.

Faculty Resources (NAEYC.org/DAP/faculty-resources)

› Appendix C: Changes to the Position Statement, Changes to the Book: Resources and Strategies for Faculty. Access the complete book appendix plus six charts. Each chart corresponds to a standard from the professional standards and competencies and reflects consistency with the position statement on developmentally appropriate practice. The charts offer sample readings, resources, activities, assignments, and reflections that faculty can incorporate across their programs.

› A test bank of questions for each chapter to help faculty prepare short quizzes

› Crosswalks with resources on developmentally appropriate practice and the professional standards and competencies

K–3 Resources (NAEYC.org/DAP/K-3-resources)

› Appendix D: Creating and Implementing Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: A Guide for Public School Audiences. Access the complete book appendix and all of the resources referred to in the appendix text.

Early Childhood Educator Resources (NAEYC.org/DAP/early-childhood-educator-resources)

› Appendix E: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Early Learning Setting: Tips and Resources for Early Childhood Educators. Access a book study guide and explore curated *Young Children* and *Teaching Young Children* articles.

How to Use Specific Content in the Book

This book is a key resource for strengthening your work as an early childhood educator, and it can be used in a range of higher education and professional development settings as well as for personal growth in knowledge, professional development, and self-reflection. It is foundational for seasoned faculty and educators who want to stay up to date in their

knowledge and approaches, for educators as part of a book study with colleagues, and for use in trainings and coursework at colleges and universities.

Many of the chapters can be read in one sitting. Some are lengthy and contain detailed background research and information and may be more approachable when read in sections and while taking notes. The vignettes throughout the chapters are numbered and titled for ease of reference.

In particular, we recommend approaching Chapters 2, 6, 9, and 10 with a plan in mind. These chapters are longer and contain a wider range of content and examples, and many readers may find it most productive to read sections of these chapters while taking notes. For Chapters 6–10, we remind readers that most of the information in the charts is contained within the "For All Ages" charts and to begin with those before looking at charts for specific ages.